

## **7.0 LAND USE AND SOCIOECONOMIC CONDITIONS**

This section presents the existing and expected land use conditions in the US-91 North Corridor Plan study area. It also provides a summary of demographic trends, based on U.S. Census data.

### **7.1 Methodology**

Existing and future land use in the study corridor was determined in three ways:

- Review of existing planning documents for Bannock, Bingham and Bonneville Counties and for the Cities of Blackfoot, Firth and Shelley.
- Stakeholder interviews with planners from the three counties and the cities.
- Field observation and examination of aerial photography and geographic information system (GIS) data.

The historic and existing population and socioeconomic characteristics within the US-91 North Corridor plan study area were developed from the 2000 U.S. Census data. This source corroborates the growth rates used to estimate future traffic volumes on US-91.

### **7.2 Existing Land Use Conditions**

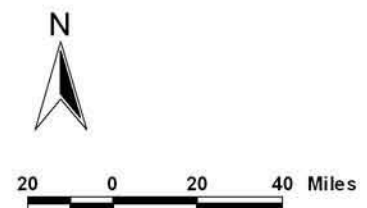
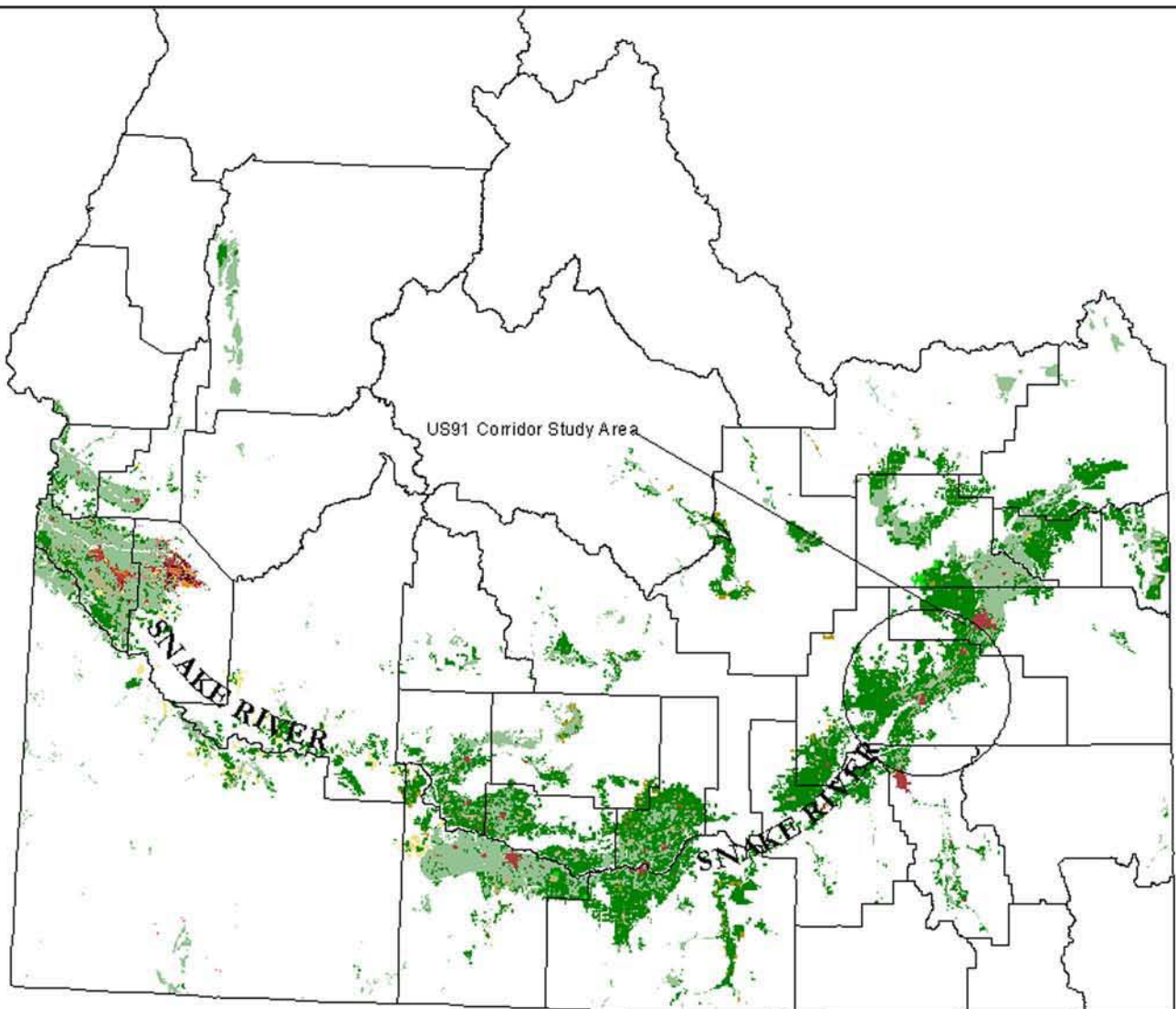
The corridor is located in the Upper Snake River Plain within Bingham, Bonneville, and Bannock Counties. The highway is one of many north/south linear features in the area. Others include I-15, Union Pacific Railroad line and the Snake River. Each has contributed to the pattern of land use within the corridor area.

#### **7.2.1 Statewide Context**

The Snake River supplies vital irrigation to farms in Southern Idaho from both surface and groundwater sources. "Irrigation water delivery systems are the engine that has single handedly transformed our state - especially the lower two thirds. Many believe that development of Idaho's irrigation capacity is the single most significant activity in the history of our state during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century."<sup>11</sup> Along the Snake River Plain, the irrigation system has and continues to be a significant influence on land use. Figure 7-1 illustrates the regional land use that is centered around the Snake River and its associated irrigation system.

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<sup>11</sup> Irrigated Agriculture -Idaho's Economic Lifeblood, by Sherl L. Chapman, [www.iwua.org/history/idhistory](http://www.iwua.org/history/idhistory)



Project No.STP-1767(101) Key No.8116

Snake River Plain  
Land Cover

Figure 7-1

Date: August 2007



## 7.2.2 Regional Context

Agriculture is the single most dominate land use within the US-91 corridor area, accounting for 95 percent of all activities, as shown in Figure 7-2 and Table 7-1. With more than 115,000 acres under irrigation, farm production and crop values are high. In Bingham County alone the total value of agricultural products in 2002 was an estimated \$268,888,000. Seventy-five percent of the total was attributable to farm crops with the remainder generated by the sale of livestock, including poultry. Potatoes are the single most valuable crop grown within the area. In Bingham County, potatoes accounted for 60 percent of the total value of all crops or \$120,257,000<sup>12</sup>.

Average farm size in Bingham County is 645 acres, up from 607 acres in 1997. Farm tract size coupled with necessary capital investment to operate a farm in the area, including farm equipment and irrigation water distribution, limit the potential for conversion to other uses. The land use pattern in rural parts of the US-91 corridor is generally stable. The extension of future urban sewer and water services outside of the existing urban areas could introduce pressure for conversion of agricultural lands to other uses.

Transportation, storage, and processing of farm crops are distinctive along the US-91 corridor, particularly during the fall. Trucks transporting beets, grain, and potatoes to storage and processing facilities in the Blackfoot to Idaho Falls section of US-91 is a common sight. Processing facilities for barley and potatoes are located at numerous locations along the corridor and operate year-around. These facilities generate significant truck and rail deliveries and shipments. Howard Taylor & Sons near US-91 and York Road and Grupo Modelo and Anheuser-Busch in southern Idaho Falls are examples of corporate processing plants.

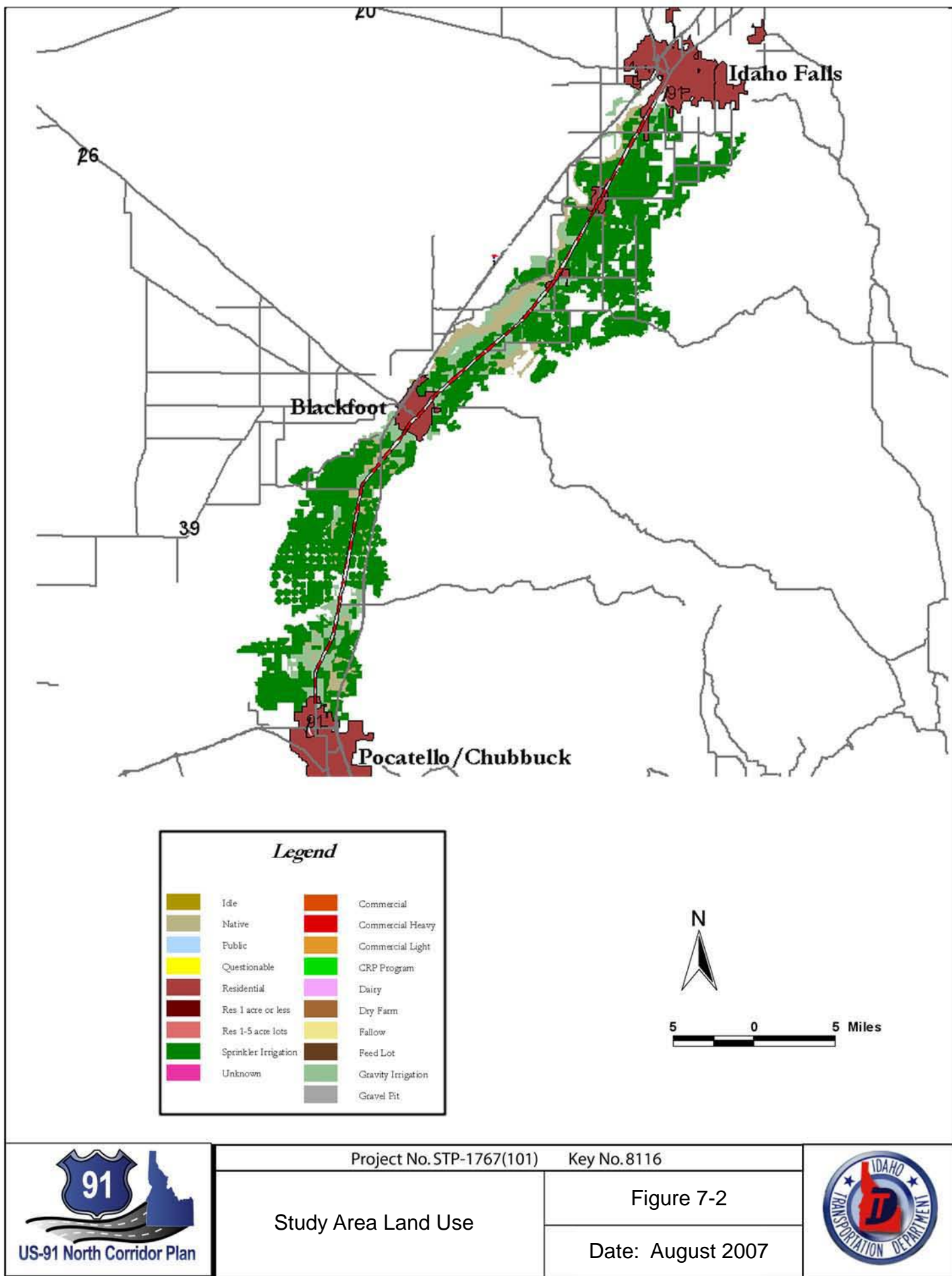
Table 7-1: US-91 Corridor Land Use<sup>13</sup>

Land Use - Description	Acres	Percent of Total
Idle	26	0.0%
Native	11,972	8.9%
Residential / Urban	6,692	5.0%
Irrigated		
Sprinkler Irrigation	97,353	72.5%
Gravity Irrigation	18,231	13.6%
Total	134,273	100%

The City of Idaho Falls at the northern terminus of the US-91 corridor has an estimated population of over 52,000; the Cities of Pocatello and Chubbuck at the southern terminus have a combined population of about 61,000. Together they account for almost 30 percent of the urban area within the corridor. The City of Blackfoot is the largest urban area wholly within the corridor and accounts for slightly more than 50 percent of the urban land area within the study area. The City had an estimated year 2004 population of 10,707.

<sup>12</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2002 Census of Agriculture.

<sup>13</sup> Land cover data was used except for residential/urban acreage which was based upon Year 2000 U.S. Census boundaries.



Project No. STP-1767(101) Key No. 8116

Study Area Land Use

Figure 7-2

Date: August 2007



The City of Shelley with an estimated year 2005 population of 3,900, City of Firth with a population of just over 400 and the community of Basalt with about 425 residents together account for the remaining 20 percent of the urban land uses. Annual population growth rates for the jurisdictions within the corridor have been less than one percent since 2000. The City of Chubbuck and Bonneville County have experienced higher growth rates of about one and three quarter's percent.

Although the Cities of Pocatello/Chubbuck and Idaho Falls anchor the ends of the corridor, they are largely outside the study area boundary. These metropolitan areas are the commercial and employment centers within southeast Idaho. As such, land uses outside the corporate limits are influenced by development within these cities. This influence is most apparent within and adjacent to the City of Shelley where large lot, rural residential subdivisions and commutes to Idaho Falls are common.

The Union Pacific rail line parallels US-91 immediately east of the highway north of Ballard Road. It is considered a main rail line and runs between Pocatello and Ox Bow, Montana. The line has a high level of usage measured in gross-ton-miles, and contributes to the economic viability of Union Pacific. The availability of reliable rail service in the region has stimulated industrial uses within the corridor area. The physical presence of the rail line and the restricted crossings of it have largely precluded non-farm residential and commercial development along the eastern side of US-91.

Private rail crossings are limited and typically serve a single rail customer or agricultural development throughout the corridor. The lands to the west side of US-91 do not have restricted access and have experienced more development with associated public road and private driveway accesses. This is particularly evident from the City of Blackfoot to York Road. As there are more opportunities for access from US-91 to adjacent lands on the west side of the highway, non-agricultural development is likely to occur to the west.

### ***7.2.3 Corridor Segment Land Use***

The existing land use and applicable zoning is presented in this section. For purposes of the planning process, the corridor was divided into six geographic segments.

#### **7.2.3.1 Siphon Road (City of Chubbuck) to Sheepskin Road (Fort Hall)**

Siphon Road is located within the City of Chubbuck and is the southern terminus for the US-91 North Corridor plan. The highway is referred to as the Yellowstone Highway within the City of Chubbuck. From Siphon Road north, extending for a mile north within the City of Chubbuck, lands along US-91 are developed with a mixture of commercial and residential uses. Only a few vacant properties remain within this area. Paradise Acres, a recent subdivision approved by the City, includes three public street accesses to US-91. Just north of the subdivision, land uses adjacent to the highway include a mixture of homes, commercial and industrial uses, and mobile homes. Each has a separate access onto the highway.

At Siphon Road and US-91, a growing industrial development is located on the east side of the highway. This area is designated as "Employment" on the City of Chubbuck Future Land Use Map. Access is limited from US-91 and occurs primarily from Siphon Road. The "Employment" designation extends along US-91 to the northern boundary of the City of Chubbuck. Light industrial and other industrial uses are expected to develop in this area.

The City of Chubbuck addresses access control in its approval processes, and requires roadway dedications along US-91 to accommodate a four lane/center turn lane cross-section. The Functional

Classification Map for the City provides for the development of a gridded street network throughout the community. Such a network, when developed, will provide better connectivity and potentially reduce travel demand on US-91 by providing alternative north-south travel routes.

The Bannock County Zoning District Map (1995) designates Residential Suburban uses on the east side of US-91 and Multiple Use on the west side. The Residential Suburban District permits one-acre lots if served by municipal water and sewer, and five-acre lots where wells and septic tank/drain fields are used. This area will likely be served by municipal water and sewer in the future and will probably develop at higher densities.

The County Multiple Use (MU) District applies to areas in the County where there are diverse land uses. Residential uses are somewhat protected in the MU district, suggesting that a trend toward residential use may occur. Currently, there is a mixture of residential, commercial, light industrial, and agricultural uses dispersed along both sides of the highway. Most uses are served by a single access from US-91 but some uses have multiple accesses (or a continuous shoulder turn-out). Future accesses are expected to conform to access policies established by the Bannock Planning Organization ("Policy on Controlled Access Arterials and Collectors and Proposed Access and Circulation Plan", Sept. 1996) which the County considers during all site plan reviews.

The Fort Hall Reservation begins at Reservation Road and extends northward to the south limits of the City of Blackfoot. Existing land uses on the reservation between Reservation Road and the Fort Hall town site include dispersed residential and agricultural uses. The Fort Hall Census Designated Place (including lands north of Reservation Road to Burns Road with Philbin and I-15 serving as the east and western boundaries, respectively) had a year 2000 population of approximately 3,200. Sixty-five percent of the residents in this area were American Indian.

Just north of Ballard Road, within the Reservation, and extending northward into the City of Idaho Falls, the Union Pacific (UP) Railroad line parallels the east side of US-91. Residential and agricultural uses are located east of the railroad track, with limited private at-grade access points across the railroad line.

Few dwellings and a single restaurant are sited along US 91 within the Fort Hall town site. Most of the town is located between US-91 and I-15; north of Ross Fork and south of Agency Road. The Shoshone-Bannock Tribal Center complex and associated Bureau of Indian Affairs offices, school, and residential uses are located here. Access to this area and the Shoshone-Bannock High Stakes Bingo and Casino, lying west of I-15 at the Ross Fork Road Interchange, from US-91 is by way of Agency Road (classified as a local road). Ross Fork Road, which is classified as a major collector, does not directly connect to US-91.

### **7.2.3.2 Sheepskin Road to South Blackfoot Interchange**

North of the Fort Hall town site and up to the intersection of US-91 and I-15 at the South Blackfoot Interchange, agricultural fields, scattered farmsteads, and an occasional agri-business occupy a landscape that is open and relatively undeveloped. At the interchange itself, there is no development. This is the only location along the corridor with direct connections to I-15.

### **7.2.3.3 South Blackfoot Interchange to Airport Road, City of Blackfoot**

This geographic segment includes the northernmost portion of the Fort Hall Reservation and the majority of the incorporated City of Blackfoot. The north boundary of the Reservation ends at the Blackfoot River / southern Blackfoot City limits. Land use changes dramatically from agricultural to urban at the reservation/city boundary.

US-91 is designated as Main Street in the City of Blackfoot and runs parallel and adjacent to the Union Pacific Railroad tracks /right-of-way. Existing land uses adjacent to US-91 in Blackfoot are primarily commercial, light industrial, with some retail. Zoning districts on the west side of US-91 are primarily Service Commercial (C-3), Light Industrial (M-1), and Community Commercial (C-2). Districts on the east side of the roadway and railroad track are primarily Single Family Residential (R-1), Two Family Residential (R-2), Community Commercial (C-2), Service Commercial (C-3), Light Industrial (M-1), and some Residential Agricultural (R-A).

Blackfoot is the Bingham County government center and home of the Eastern Idaho State Fairgrounds. Both complexes are located west of US-91. The Blackfoot Livestock Commission is located adjacent to the railroad on the east side of US-91. Several city streets cross the railroad tracks and US-91 at-grade to connect neighborhoods and the central business district.

Future growth in the City of Blackfoot is expected to take place north and west of the city in the city's impact area. This potential expansion area is not within the existing Blackfoot City limits and is under the jurisdiction of Bingham County.

I-15 is accessed within this segment via West Judicial and West Bridge Streets, a one-way couplet that serves as the I-15 Business Loop. Both roadways are classified as principal arterials. The interchange is located approximately 1.25 miles west of US-91.

#### **7.2.3.4 Airport Road (City of Blackfoot) to New Sweden Road (City of Shelley)**

This section of the US-91 corridor is within Bingham County and includes the cities of Firth and Shelley. Land use adjacent to US-91 outside the urbanized areas is predominately agricultural. Low density residential development either associated with agriculture or on individual residential lots is dispersed throughout the area.

US-91 is the main street in Firth. Adjacent land uses include commercial and residential. I-15 is accessed via West River Road at the Rose-Firth interchange approximately 6.5 miles to the west. The Idaho Supreme potato processing plant is a dominant land use on the east side of US-91 in the City of Firth.

North and to the east of US-91 is the small rural community of Basalt. Access to Basalt from US-91 is restricted to two County roads that cross both US-91 and the parallel Union Pacific rail line.

Between Firth and the City of Shelley, land use adjacent to US-91 is predominantly agricultural. The area has scattered single family dwellings, large lot rural subdivisions, and two mobile home parks, both of which occur immediately adjacent to US-91. Basic American Foods is a dominant land use in the City of Shelley, located on the east side of US-91.

The Bingham County Comprehensive Plan Map (2004) shows Residential and Residential/Agriculture uses surrounding the communities of Shelley, Firth, Basalt, and Blackfoot. Between Blackfoot and Firth, the west side of the roadway is planned for Industrial/Commercial uses. The east side is designated for Agriculture. Between Firth and Shelley, both sides of US-91 are planned for Industrial/Commercial Uses.

Bingham County representatives indicate that the lack of municipal water and sewer in large sections of the County and large single-owner agricultural operations affect growth. Several municipal service lines have been extended in the northern portion of the County around Shelley, Firth, and New Sweden Road that have permitted smaller lots and denser development. These growth areas are likely to have an impact on US-91 as people commute to and from employment centers and other destinations within Idaho Falls.

#### **7.2.3.5 New Sweden Road (City of Shelley) to York Road**

US-91 is designated as State Street through the City of Shelley. Zoning designations adjacent to the highway include Heavy Commercial (HC), Single Family Dwelling (R), Central Business (CB), and Manufacturing. The manufacturing land is located east of US-91. Several east/west and north/south streets cross the Union Pacific railroad tracks and the highway at-grade.

Interstate 15 is accessed via West Fir Street at the Shelley Interchange approximately 3.2 miles to the west.

Between Shelley and York Road, current land use is primarily agricultural, although several single family residences are located on the west side of US-91. According to the Bonneville County Comprehensive Plan, these lands are planned for Industrial and Commercial uses and are zoned Industrial/Manufacturing (I&M-1) and Commercial (C-2).

The City of Shelley and Bingham County have policies that encourage development in areas where there are services to maximize public investment, minimize urban sprawl, and protect agricultural land from development. However, there is still development pressure and much of it is focused on Shelley and areas northwest of Shelley. Several new subdivisions have been approved or are in process, responding to new and expanding employment opportunities associated with industrial uses in Idaho Falls. The Shelley district is considered by local officials as the growth hot-spot and where some big box developments on the west edge of the highway are envisioned.

#### **7.2.3.6 York Road to Sunnyside Road (City of Idaho Falls)**

At York Road, the rural and agricultural land uses transition to suburban and urban. Development at the intersection includes a large construction firm and an older residential property. Highway commercial development is focused about 2 miles to the west at Exit 113, the I-15/York Road interchange. The Dad's truck stop complex, Doug Andrus Trucking and Killpack Construction are located along York Road.

Development fronting onto US-91 in this segment is diverse. Industrial uses, single story offices, and manufacturing plants account for the majority of land uses in the area. Several major employers are located east of US-91, including Modelo, manufacturer of Corona and Pacifico, and Anheuser-Busch.